

20-3

Hafiz
The Persian
Lyric Poet





PRIVATELY PRINTED

—HAFIZ—

THE PERSIAN LYRIC POET



Preface

MOHAMMED SCHEMS-ED-DIN HAFIZ the prince of Persian lyric poets is to us the most familiar of all the poets of the East with the exception of Omar al-Khayyami. He was born at Shiraz and is known to have been a contemporary of Dante.

In Persia his odes are considered worthy of comparison with the Koran itself. He is Persia's immortal poet, and to this day the beautiful dark-eyed Shiraz maidens may be seen on their annual pilgrimage to his sacred tomb bearing their bouquets of roses bound round with the brightly coloured silken handkerchiefs, which they themselves have fondly woven. These the pilgrims place at his grave where they consult his oracular odes for information about their future.

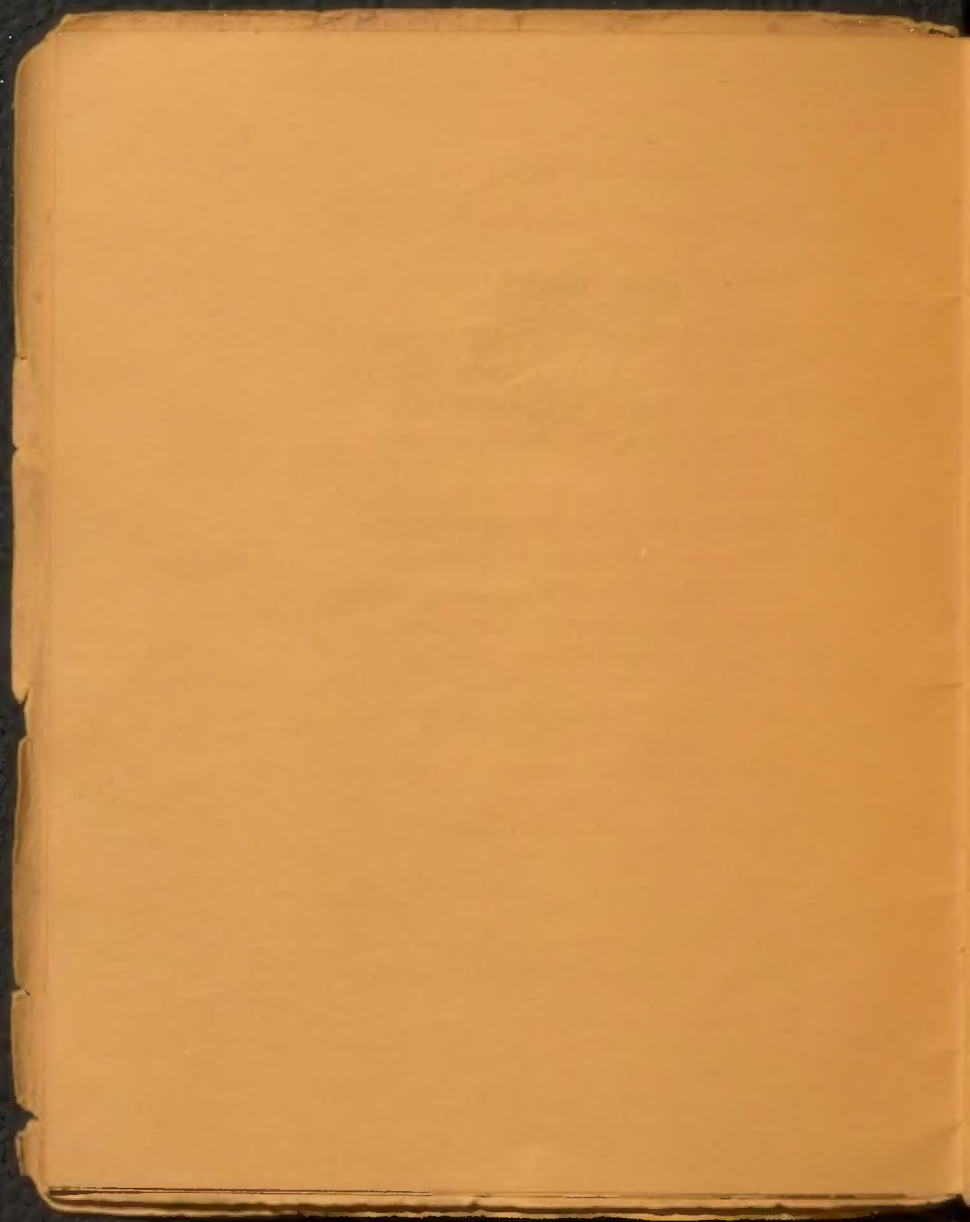
Many are the stories told of the odes of 'the Anacreon of the East' having been opened at random to be consulted by kings and leaders. Even at his death in 1388, when some Mohammedans in Shiraz forbade his burial according to their rites, owing to his having violated the laws of the Koran, his friends on opening his works are said to have read:—

'O! turn not your steps from the
obsequies of Tafiz;
For tho' immersed in sin, he will
rise into paradise.'

Notwithstanding his fame, for his works have been classics to millions of people for many centuries, he seems to have died a poor man.

The translations of Gazels or love songs contained in this little volume are by Sir William Jones, with the exception of 'Gazel to his love,' by John Nott and 'On his travels,' by Sir Gore Ouseley.





GAZEL ON HIS LOVE

Sweet maid, if thou wouldst charm
my sight,
And bid these arms thy neck in-
fold;
That rosy cheek, that lily hand,
Would give thy poet more delight
Than all Bocara's vaunted gold,
Than all the gems of Samarcand.

Boy, let yon liquid ruby flow,
And bid thy pensive heart be glad,
Whate'er the frowning zealots say:
Tell them, their Eden cannot show
A stream so clear as Rocabad,
A bow'r so sweet as Mosellay.

Oh! when these fair perfidious
maids,
Whose eyes our secret haunts in-
fest,
Their dear destructive charms dis-
play,
Each glance my tender heart in-
vades,
And robs my wounded soul of rest,
As Tartars seize their destined
prey.

v

In vain with love our bosoms glow:
Can all our tears, can all our sighs,
New lustre to those charms im-
part?

Can cheeks, where living roses
blow,
Where Nature spreads her richest
dyes,
Require the borrowed gloss of art?

Speak not of fate:—ah! change the
theme,

And talk of odours, talk of wine,
Talk of the flow'rs that round us
bloom:

'Tis all a cloud, 'tis all a dream;
To love and joy thy thoughts con-
fine,

Nor hope to pierce the sacred
gloom,

Beauty has such resistless pow'r,
That ev'n the chaste Egyptian
dame

Sighed for the blooming Hebrew
boy:

For her how fatal was the hour
When to the banks of Nilus came
A youth so lovely and so coy!

But ah! sweet maid, my counsel
hear
(Youth should attend when those
advise
Whom long experience renders
sage):
While music charms the ravished
ear,
While sparkling cups delight our
eyes,
Be gay, and scorn the frowns of
age.
What cruel answer have I heard?
And yet, by Heav'n, I love thee
still:
Can aught be cruel from thy lips?
Yet say, how fell that bitter word
From lips which streams of sweet-
ness fill,
Which naught but drops of honey
sip?
Go boldly forth, my simple lay,
Whose accents flow with artless
ease,
Like orient pearls at random
strung:
Thy notes are sweet, the damsels
say,
But oh, far sweeter, if they please
The Nymph for whom these notes
are sung.

THE FEAST OF SPRING

My breast is filled with roses,
My cup is crowned with wine,
And by my side reposes
The maid I hail as mine.
The monarch, whereso'er he be,
Is but a slave compared to me!

Their glare no torches throwing
Shall in our bower be found;
Her eyes, like moonbeams glowing,
Cast light enough around:
And well all odours I can spare,
Who scent the perfume of her hair.

The honey-dew thy charm might
borrow,
Thy lip alone to me is sweet;
When thou art absent, faint with
sorrow
I hide me in some lone retreat.
Why talk to me of power or
fame?—
What are those idle toys to me?
Why ask the praises of my name?
My joy, my triumph is in thee!

How blest am I! around me, swelling,

The notes of melody arise;

I hold the cup, with juice excelling,
And gaze upon thy radiant eyes.

O Hafiz!—never waste thy hours
Without the cup, the lute, and
love!

For 'tis the sweetest time of
flowers,

And none these moments shall
reprove.

The nightingales around thee sing,
It is the joyous feast of spring.



GAZEL ON HIS LOVE

Sweet breeze! her breath thy murmurs bear,

The perfume of her sigh is thine;
But dare not play amidst her hair,
For every golden curl is mine!

O rose what radiant hues hast thou,

That in her face less brightly glow!
Her love is joy without regret,
While briars and thorns thy bloom beset.

O opening buds!—her cheeks more fair,

For ever rosy blushing are.

Narcissus!—thou art pale of hue,
Her eyes that languish, sparkle too;

I tell thee, gently waving pine!
More graceful is her form than thine.

O my rapt soul! if thou hadst
power
To choose all blessings earth can
give,
Is there a better, richer dower,
Than for her tenderness to live?
Come, my sole love! from those
dear eyes
Thy Hafiz is too long away;
Come, give his heart the sweet sur-
prise,
Though 'twere but for a single
day!



THE SEASON OF THE ROSE

String the lyre!—Has Fortune ever
Given to men of worth their due?
Then, since vain is all endeavour,
And we scorn her malice too,
Why should we refuse to share
All the joys these hours prepare?
Now the air is filled with mirth;
Now the roses spring from earth;
Now they bloom, but now alone,—
Fear not, though the wise re-
prove;
Ere their soft perfume be gone,
Raise the soul to verse and love,
O Hafiz!—it were shame to say,
—In nightingales like us 'twere
treason,—
That we, who make the magic lay,
Sang not in the rose's season.

THE OMEN

This morning I resolved, at last,
All idle thoughts far hence to cast,
And in repentance steep my soul,—
Forgot the roses and the bowl!
'Oh, let some omen be my guide,
And I will follow it,' I cried:
But say, alas! what could I do?
'Twas spring, that breaker of all
vows;—

I saw the trees their leaves renew,
I saw fresh roses on the boughs:
I saw the merry cup go round,
My rivals with enjoyment crowned!
Whilst I, a looker-on, must see
All gay and full of hope but me!
One draught! — but one! — that
drunk, I fly
At once this dang'rous company.

But, ah! SHE came! — as buds to
light,
My heart expanded at her sight,
And every strong resolve gave
way—
My rivals saw me blest as they!
I'll seat my love amidst the bower,
With rosy garlands bind her
hair;

Wreath round her arms the jas-
mine flower,

Than those white chains more
sweet and fair,

Away!—I was not born a sage;

Am I the censor of the age?—

Is mine a priest's or judge's part,
To chide at mirth and love like
this?

Elated, like the rose, my heart
Throws off its shrouding veil for
bliss.

Why should I censure wine? fill full
To her, the kind, the beautiful.

If but one kiss I should obtain,
Youth and delight were mine
again;

And I another age should live.

Such power the smiles of beauty
give.

Reproach me, then, ye wise, no
more,

Nor say I joy in secret pleasure;
Let all behold my cup run o'er,
While harp and lute keep joyous
measure.

MYSTIC ODE

In wide Eternity's vast space,
Where no beginning was, wert
Thou;
The rays of all-pervading grace
Beneath Thy veil, flamed on Thy
brow.
Then Love and Nature sprang to
birth,
And Life and Beauty filled the
earth.

Awake, my soul! pour forth thy
praise,
To that great Being anthems
raise—
That wondrous Architect who said,
'Be formed,' and this great orb was
made.

Since first I heard the blissful
sound—
'To man My Spirit's breath is
given;'
I knew, with thankfulness pro-
found,
His sons we are—our Home is
heaven.

Oh! give me tidings that shall tell
When I may hope with thee to
 dwell,
That I may quit this world of pain,
Nor seek to be its guest again.

A bird of holiness am I,
That from the vain world's net
 would fly;
Shed, bounteous Lord, one cheering
 shower
From Thy pure cloud of guiding
 power
Before, even yet, the hour is come,
When my dust rises towards its
 home.

What are our deeds?—all worth-
less, all—

O bring Devotion's wine,
That strength upon my soul may
 fall

From drops Thou mad'st divine.
The world's possessions fade and
 flee,
The only good is—loving Thee!

O happy hour! when I shall rise
From earth's delusions to the skies,
Shall find my soul at rest, and
greet

The traces of my loved one's feet:
Dancing with joy, whirled on with
speed,

Like motes that gorgeous sun-
beams feed,

Until I reach the fountain bright
Whence yonder sun derives his
light.



GAZEL TO HIS LOVE

Haply, gale, if thou shouldst rove,
Wand'ring on thy trackless way,
Near the mansion of my love;•
There awhile, I pr'ythee, stay;
And from her amber tresses bring
Delicious perfume on thy loaded
wing.

But, regardless of my pain,
Should, alas! the heav'ns decree,
That my labours must be vain,
And mine eyes no message see:
Some grains of dust at least, I pray,
From my dear mistress' door, O
bring away!

Beggar that I am! why seek
What I never can possess?
'Tis a wish as proud as weak,
'Tis a hope without redress!
Except, when I in sleep shall spy
The beauteous form of her for
whom I die.

Let the scornful nymph my flame
Cherish with no kind return;
Still my passion glows the same,
Still unceasing shall it burn!
Nor shall a world's vast wealth
suffice,
To buy one ringlet of that hair I
prize.

What avails it that with glee,
Carolling thy pleasant song,
Hafiz, thou from cares are free,
Cares that to the world belong!
When, subject to love's proud con-
troul,
A tyrant fair enslaves thy captive
soul?



ON HIS TRAVELS

The world to me has been a home;
Wherever knowledge could be
sought,
Through differing climes I loved to
roam,
And every shade of feeling
caught
From minds, whose varied fruits
supply
The food of my philosophy.
And still the treasures of my store
Have made my wanderings less
severe;
From every spot some prize I bore,
From every harvest gleaned an
ear,
But find no land can ever vie
With bright Shiraz in purity;
And blest for ever be the spot
Which makes all other climes for-
got!

